

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04

H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 IO-13 EB-07 COME-00 STR-04 TRSE-00

EAE-00 ACDA-07 OMB-01 /110 W
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2033

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY SEOUL PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM PRIORITY

AMCONGEN HONG KONG PRIORITY

USLO PEKING PRIORITY

CINCPAC HONOLULU HAWAII PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 13284

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, JA, KN, KS

SUBJ: NORTH KOREAN EXPULSION OF JAPANESE BUSINESSMEN AND OTHER
MEASURES FOLLOWING PANMUNJOM INCIDENT

REF: SEOUL 6916 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY. FONOFF INFORMED EMBASSY THAT RECENT EXPULSION OF JAPANESE BUSINESSMEN FROM NORTH KOREA FOLLOWING PANMUNJOM INCIDENT WAS SELECTIVE WITH JAPANESE TECHNICIANS AT IMPORTANT PROJECTS ALLOWED TO REMAIN. NORTH KOREANS HAVE ALSO CANCELLED VARIOUS BUSINESS AND CULTURAL CONTACTS WITH JAPAN. RETURNED BUSINESSMEN REPORTED PARTIAL BLACK-OUT IN PYONGYANG. FONOFF BELIEVED NORTH KOREAN MEASURES REPRESENTED PROPAGANDA EFFORT TO MAINTAIN LINE THAT WAR THREAT REMAINS HIGH. END SUMMARY.

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1. FONOFF NE ASIA DIVDIR ENDO BRIEFED EMBOFFS ON RECENT SELECTIVE EXPLUSION OF JAPANESE BUSINESSMEN AND TECHNICIANS FROM NORTH KOREA. ON AUGUST 23 NORTH KOREANS INFORMED EIGHT BUSINESSMEN OF YUSHIN SHOJI AND TOKO BUSSAN IMPORT-EXPORT COMPANIES THEY MUST LEAVE COUNTRY AS "THEIR LIVES AND SAFETY COULD NO LONGER BE GUARANTEED" IN VIEW OF "DANGEROUS SITUATION" CREATED BY PANMUNJOM INCIDENT. TWO ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS OF HITACHI SHIPBUILDING WERE ALSO TOLD TO LEAVE, BUT REMAINING SIX HITACHI TECHNICIANS IN WONSAN WERE ALLOWED TO STAY ALONG WITH ALMOST 30 SHINWA BUSSAN (MITSUI DUMMY CORPORATION) TECHNICIANS WORKING ON CEMENT PLANT NEAR PYONGYANG. PERSONNEL OF THESE FOUR COMPANIES CONSTITUTE ENTIRE JAPANESE BUSINESS PRESENCE IN NORTH KOREA. SHINWA BUSSAN CEMENT PLANT PROJECT IS CONSIDERED MOST IMPORTANT BY NORTH KOREANS.

2. ENDO CALLED ATTENTION TO RELATED NORTH KOREAN ACTIONS DURING PAST WEEK. NORTH KOREANS HAVE INFORMED VARIOUS JAPANESE BUSINESSMEN THEY CANNOT VISIT PYONGYANG AT THIS TIME AND VISIT TO JAPAN LATER THIS MONTH OF NORTH KOREAN DANCE TROUPE SPONSORED BY YOMIURI NEWSPAPER HAS BEEN "POSTPONED." APPROXIMATELY 40 MEMBERS OF PRO-NORTH KOREAN CHOSEN SOREN ORGANIZATION HAD EARLIER APPLIED TO GOJ FOR PERMISSION TO VISIT PYONGYANG FOR FOUNDATION DAY CELEBRATION SEPTEMBER 9, BUT THESE APPLICATIONS AND SEVERAL OTHERS BY RESIDENT DPRK-ORIENTED KOREAN GROUPS, HAVE NOW BEEN WITHDRAWN. ENDO ALSO HEARD THAT NORTH KOREAN EMBASSIES HAVE CANCELLED FOUNDATION DAY RECEPTIONS IN SOME CAPITALS.

3. ACCORDING TO RECENTLY RETURNED BUSINESSMAN DEBRIEFED BY ENDO, BLACK-OUT WAS INSTITUTED IN PYONGYAN IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING PANMUNJOM INCIDENT AUGUST 19. ORIGINALLY ANNOUNCED AS "PRACTICE," FOUR DAYS LATER BLACK-OUT WAS DESCRIBED AS SERIOUS PRECAUTIONARY MEASURE. BLACK-OUT, HOWEVER, DID NOT EXTEND TO IMPORTANT INDUSTRIAL FACILITIES IN PYONGYANG AREA. MOREOVER, THERE WAS NO CURFEW AND NORMAL SOCIAL GATHERINGS CONTINUED. AS FAR AS BUSINESSMEN COULD DETERMINE, LIFE IN CITY WAS MUCH AS USUAL. NORTH KOREANS REPORTEDLY TOLD JAPANESE BUSINESSMAN THAT ALTHOUGH TENSION IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING PANMUNJOM INCIDENT HAD APPARENTLY EASED, PRESENT PERIOD WAS MOST DANGEROUS TIME WHEN US WAS LIKELY TO STRIKE.

4. RETURNING BUSINESSMEN STATED SOME "RUSSIAN TOURISTS" HAD ALSO BEEN ORDERED TO LEAVE. BEYOND SKETCHY REPORTS IA SWEDISH DIPLOMATS IN PEKING THAT PYONGYANG SITUATION WAS NORMAL, ENDO HAD NO INDICAFION

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TIONS WHAT INSTRUCTIONS NORTH KOREAN AUTHORITIES HAD GIVEN LOCAL DIPLOMATIC COMMUNITY OR NON-JAPANESE FOREIGN BUSINESSMEN.

5. ENDO OFFERED THREE POSSIBLE EXPLANATIONS OF NORTH KOREAN ACTIONS: (A) MEASURES WERE SIGNS OF INTERNAL STRUGGLE WITHIN HIERARCHY; (B) THEY REPRESENTED REAL FEAR OF US ATTACK; AND (C) THEY WERE ATTEMPTING TO DEMONSTRATE TO BOTH DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL OPINION THAT THREAT OF WAR REMAINED HIGH BECAUSE OF US ACTIONS. POINTING

TO SELECTIVE NATURE OF BOTH EXPULSION AND BLACK-OUT, ENDO GUESSED THAT THIRD EXPLANATION, I.E., PYONG YANG ENGAGED IN ESSENTIALLY A PROPAGANDA EXERCISE, REPRESENTED REAL NORTH KOREAN MOTIVE.

6. EMBOFF SUGGESTED THAT EXPULSION OF BUSINESSMEN MIGHT BE NORTH KOREAN TACTIC TO DEMONSTRATE IRRITATION OVER JAPANESE FIRMNESS IN DEBT RESCHEDULING NEGOTIATIONS. WHILE ENDO DID NOT DISMISS POSSIBILITY, HE THOUGHT ON BALANCE KOREAN MEASURES WERE NOT RESTRICTED TO JAPANESE, AND THUS NOT SPECIFICALLY TIED TO DEBT RESCHEDULING. IN THIS REGARD, HE ASKED THAT EMBASSY PASS ON TO FONOFF ANY INFORMATION REGARDING NORTH KOREAN ACTIONS TOWARD OTHER FOREIGN BUSINESSMEN OR DIPLOMATS WE MAY RECEIVE.
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